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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON
THE WORK OF THE ORGANIZATION

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-first year

Letter dated 18 January 1996 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Following the issuance of your Supplement to an Agenda for Peace (A/50/60-S/1995/1), the President of the Security Council, in his statement of 22 February 1995, invited Member States to present further reflections on United Nations operations in the area of international peace and security.

Attached is France's contribution to the consideration of this important question (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under the item entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization", and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Alain DEJAMMET

* Reissued for technical reasons.

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ANNEX

Supplement to An Agenda for Peace

Aide-mémoire by France

France welcomed the issuance on 3 January 1995 of the Supplement to an Agenda for Peace by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. It believes that this report, which takes into account the experience acquired over the past two years, makes a valuable contribution to the discussion on this subject.

Pursuant to the invitation extended by the President of the Security Council in his statement of 22 February 1995, and by way of supplementing the aide-mémoire issued by France following the publication of An Agenda for Peace, the French Government wishes to present the following reflections on United Nations operations in the area of international peace and security.

I. A DETAILED LOOK AT THE NATURE OF PEACE-RESTORATION AND CONFLICT-MODERATION OPERATIONS

In his Supplement to an Agenda for Peace, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, speaking in the context of United Nations operations in the area of international peace and security, draws a distinction between preventive diplomacy and deployment, peacemaking (by diplomatic means), peace-keeping (stricto sensu), post-conflict peace-building (chiefly through disarmament of the parties and restoration of political and economic structures and the social fabric) and enforcement action.

France fully endorses this list of categories. However, it would propose adding to the list in order to reflect more accurately the nature of operations that are deployed before a conflict has ended and are intended to restore peace or moderate the conflict by methods that involve both securing the parties' consent (principally through negotiation) and constraint (to ensure that safe areas or the free movement of humanitarian convoys are respected, for example).

The usefulness of such a category, of which Operation Turquoise in Rwanda is one example, leads us to stress the following points.

The fundamental difference between operations of this type and conventional peace-keeping operations is that the former are undertaken before the conflict has ended or while it is in its final stages, which means that at least one of the parties believes that its interests are best served by a prolongation, rather than an ending, of the conflict. An operation aimed at ending the conflict cannot, therefore, be neutral; nor can an operation aimed at moderating the conflict be neutral, for the latter seeks of necessity to modify the behaviour of at least one of the adversaries, which in most cases means simply preventing it from using whatever strategies or tactics it considers most appropriate (by creating safe areas, banning the overflight of certain areas, or organizing the return of refugees, for example).

It is clear from the outset that, by thwarting the plans of one or more parties to the conflict, such operations are unlikely to enjoy the parties' consent. This can only be obtained gradually, through negotiation but also by assistance to the population (medical assistance, civil engineering and so forth); at the same time, the operation must be prepared to use force to impose conditions that are not yet accepted, beginning, perhaps, with the very presence of United Nations troops. The decision to launch such operations must therefore be based on Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. The deployment of troops as well as the protective and combat equipment they require must be planned for in a manner that will permit the use of force.

Thus operations of this type contain the risk of escalation, which, if not overcome, can change the nature of an operation, making it a coercive military action (peace enforcement). Such a development must not be ruled out on principle; however, the political cost (particularly the withdrawal of certain contingents) and the technical difficulties (change in military deployment) must be reckoned. Accordingly, peace-restoration and conflict-moderation missions must be extremely disciplined and skilled when they use force; above all, they must enjoy, to the extent possible, undisputed military superiority.

Given that the Organization's military resources are limited, it follows that the number of such operations cannot be greatly increased: the decision rests, and must rest, with the Security Council.

Having their basis in the power of intimidation but equally in the effort to secure consent, such operations must be impartial rather than neutral. The terms of their mandate may thwart the military goals or methods of one party more than those of the other, yet the United Nations force must ensure that these terms are equally respected by all: the force must remain an arbitrator and must ensure that it is perceived as such.

Such operations require great care and must be carried out by troops that are well prepared. Combat training and a knowledge of the operation environment are vital to such preparation. However, basic training must be supplemented by training in negotiating techniques so that the force, and senior personnel in particular, are really equipped to deal with a number of different authorities.

II. ENHANCEMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION'S RAPID REACTION CAPACITY

The current timetable for mounting a United Nations force is often too long. The most typical example is UNAMIR II, which could not be deployed until six months after its creation by a Security Council resolution. France suggests that this situation be improved by actually implementing and refining the system of stand-by arrangements and by establishing rapid deployment units within this system.

A. Implementation and refinement of the system of stand-by arrangements

The system of stand-by arrangements, which was put in place in 1994, is not yet fully operational, for its effectiveness depends on the speed with which the United Nations Secretariat can use it to mount a cohesive force suited to the operation in question, and thus on the accuracy of the data available to it. The Secretariat, therefore, should continue to encourage States to become part of this system while also requesting States that are already participants to make their offers more specific by submitting detailed volumetric descriptions of the resources proposed. Such descriptions should also mention the timetable for the deployment of each unit (so as to avoid, for example, having a combat unit arrive in the theatre of operations far in advance of the necessary support units).

In addition, it is difficult to create a viable command structure in a vacuum: it would therefore be desirable for countries having the capacity to do so to propose command units constituting the nucleus of an operation headquarters to which officers from other contributor States would be assigned. France has units of this type which it can make available on four days' notice; some unit members could also help to staff the Situation Centre in the Department of Peace-keeping Operations.

B. Establishment of rapid deployment units

Such measures, however, may not be sufficient; the system of stand-by arrangements is designed to allow for deployment within two months, which is too long in cases where any delay will aggravate the situation on the ground and reduce the chances for carrying out a successful operation.

In this light, the French Government feels that the proposal concerning the establishment of a rapid reaction force put forward by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his report entitled "Supplement to an Agenda for Peace" is of particular interest. France is aware, however, of the political and technical difficulties such a project would encounter, and it therefore proposes that rapid deployment units should be set up within the system of stand-by arrangements. The first characteristic of these units is that it would take only a short time to deploy them, ranging from 2 to 10 days. The concern for effectiveness in implementing such a system also requires that the proposed troops, together with their protective and combat equipment, be of high quality, that the command structures be pre-planned and that the exercises, which could be carried out at the general staff level and, on the ground, through troop mobilization exercises, be organized jointly by the United Nations and by States that have offered to contribute rapid deployment units.

At the meeting held by the Security Council at the level of Heads of State and Government on 31 January 1992, France had announced that it was prepared to contribute to the United Nations, within less than two weeks, up to two contingents of 1,000 troops each. In the context of this commitment, it now

announces that it will soon submit to the Secretariat detailed volumetric descriptions of these units.

III. STRENGTHENING THE GENERAL STAFF CAPACITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Despite the considerable efforts made by the United Nations Secretariat to improve the services concerned, including the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, the effectiveness of United Nations operations is still being limited by the inadequacy of the Organization's general staff capacities in the areas of both planning and command, and the most pressing need appears to concern the definition of military operations in fulfilment of the mandate established by the Security Council. These capacities should be reinforced by increasing the resources of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and setting up specific teams for each operation.

A. Development of planning capacities

In order to be fully effective, military planning must set as its goal not only to enforce political decisions (the Council's mandate) but also to help to prepare them.

It is therefore desirable to continue to develop an early operational planning capacity in the Department of Peace-keeping Operations. To strengthen the effectiveness of such planning, it would be useful to envisage the elaboration of deployment scenarios as soon as a crisis develops which is likely to lead to a United Nations operation.

France advocates the systematic deployment on the ground, from the time when an operation begins to be seriously considered, of a team composed of members of the Mission Planning Service of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and of a planning element which includes, in particular, a nucleus provided by an individual country to show its particular interest in the operation. This team would help those who would be in charge of the force, namely, the future Special Representative of the Secretary-General and, where possible, the future military commander of the operation. The team would formulate a concept of operations which would be annexed to the report submitted by the Secretary-General to the Security Council and would help to clarify the Council's debates.

In this context, the Government of France is contributing to the United Nations a planning unit which can be deployed within 48 hours.

Once the resolution establishing an operation has been adopted, this unit, which may be reinforced as needed by the future commanders of the main national detachments, would ensure the overall military planning of the operation by preparing, in particular, a detailed military directive and the initial order of operations.

Finally, after the operation has been set up, it would normally be the responsibility of the Mission Planning Service of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations to adapt the operation to the changing military and political situation, a task which could involve the preparation and translation into military terms of new Security Council resolutions modifying the initial mandate, up to the planning of withdrawal. It may well be necessary, however, in the case of large and complex operations, to have further recourse to a planning unit.

In the event that rapid deployment units are to be used, this team will be reinforced where necessary, in order to plan the deployment of these units, by the commanders of national contingents that have been contributed to the United Nations in this context or by other officers representing contributor States.

B. Improvement of command structures

The establishment of an effective planning system should, in itself, improve the command of the force.

It is important, none the less, to strengthen the effectiveness of command headquarters, especially for the largest and most delicate missions, by establishing them more quickly and limiting their necessary heterogeneity. This is the reasoning behind our proposal for command units (see II.A above), which would be particularly useful in cases where rapid deployment units are used.

The Situation Centre within the Department of Peace-keeping Operations should continue to be strengthened. France proposes that the staff of this centre be reinforced by representatives of States contributing to an operation, at their request, and this would make it possible at the same time to give these States more rapid and precise information about the evolution of the situation on the ground and to improve the Secretariat's follow-up capabilities.

It would be helpful to specify the nature of the authority of the force commander (and, ultimately, the Secretary-General) over national units. France feels that this authority should be closely akin to operational control. The rules of engagement for each force should also be clearly spelt out.

Lastly, the many incidents and difficulties that have occurred have shown how important it is to harmonize the action of the civilian component with that of the military component of the operations, avoiding both overlapping and a too rigid separation of duties (where the civilian component would be, in particular, solely in charge of administrative duties and negotiation).

The desirable command structure obviously depends on the nature of the missions to be accomplished. Experience seems to recommend, however, on the one hand, the systematic designation, for all operations of whatever size, of a special representative of the Secretary-General having complete authority over the various components of the operation and, on the other hand, at least for peace-restoration and conflict-moderation operations, which almost inextricably link military tasks (even including combat) with negotiation and humanitarian

aid activities, an integrated structure involving close cooperation between civilians and military personnel at all levels of command, including logistics.

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In conclusion, France is aware that the success of United Nations operations in the area of international peace and security is also based in large part on the quality of the troops engaged in these interventions. It supports the training programme for mobile peace-keeping training teams, in which it intends to participate actively by assigning French officers to these teams and hosting training courses in France. It is also prepared to open its specialized training centres to foreign trainees and to help States at their request to establish national training centres in liaison with the competent United Nations bodies.